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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 001685

SIPDIS

AMMAN FOR REFCOORD; DEPARTMENT FOR PRM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [ICRC](#) [GOI](#) [INTERNAL](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON MDA EFFORTS TO CHANGE ITS STATUTES AND
IMPLEMENT ITS MOU WITH THE PRCS

REF: A. TEL AVIV 1619

[B. GENEVA](#) 986

Classified By: Political Counselor Norman H. Olsen. Reason 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Following Foreign Minister/Justice Minister Tzipi Livni's engagement April 23 on Magen David Adom (MDA) accession to the Red Cross Movement (ref A), the GOI and MDA reportedly have made some progress toward amending MDA statutes, as required by the IFRC-ICRC joint statutes committee. Brinkmanship played a role during negotiations between MDA and the concerned Government of Israel (GOI) ministries of Health, Justice, Finance and Foreign Affairs -- including an episode when MDA reportedly threatened to withdraw its application to join the Movement rather than accept the role the GOI demanded for itself. The IFRC local representative has played a positive role in calming tensions, and the IFRC representative is confident that MDA and the GOI will reach a compromise acceptable to the Red Cross Movement officials. It is not certain, however, that the compromise will satisfy the Red Cross national societies.

On May 1, Swiss Ambassador-At-Large Didier Pfirter will be visiting Israel to monitor MDA progress on implementing the MDA-Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). End Summary.

Amending the MDA Statutes: Closer to Consensus

¶2. (C) MDA President Noam Yifrach told deputy polcouns April 27 that MDA volunteers, who currently dominate the MDA national council, have agreed to support the GOI proposal regarding nomination of the MDA President (ref A). The only remaining point of disagreement concerns the GOI demand to introduce a three-person "review committee" to determine the suitability of candidates for the new 13-member MDA executive board, a majority of whose members will now be drawn from MDA volunteers. Yifrach reports that MDA volunteers have agreed to accept the imposition of a review committee comprising one government representative, one MDA representative and one public sector representative, but MDA opposes the GOI's plan to place a government employee at the helm of this committee. Yifrach claimed that a GOI-controlled review committee would be subject to scrutiny by other national societies in June: "The Arabs won't be the problem. No one will vote for us."

¶3. (C) MDA and GOI ministries have engaged in reciprocal brinkmanship during the tug of war over amending MDA statutes. At one point, on April 25, Yifrach reportedly threatened to withdraw MDA's application to join the Red Cross Movement rather than agree to the GOI proposal, but the MFA claims that they brought him back from the brink. As of April 27, both MDA and the Ministry of Health have compromise proposals at the ready, and negotiations should resume after the weekend over this final sticking point.

Implementing the MDA-PRCS MOU: Some Progress

¶4. (C) MFA Director of International Organizations Daniel Meron updated poloff April 26 on progress on implementation of the MOU between MDA and PRCS. IFRC's Anna Segall April 28 provided information to poloff that confirmed Meron's reports. They report the following progress:

-- MDA and PRCS met on April 25. MDA officials showed PRCS officials the Hebrew signs that the GOI will post at checkpoints and Allenby Bridge, which declare that PRCS ambulances must receive priority clearance and should skip to the head of the line.

-- Meron said that the GOI approved six ambulances and 23 paramedics to receive priority clearance through checkpoints into East Jerusalem. Meron also said that the head of the Israeli Civil Administration for the Occupied Territories (COGATT), General Mishlev, gave this guidance to soldiers manning the crossings. Segall confirmed that she had also heard this information from MDA officials.

-- Meron and Segall both said that the GOI has approved two ambulances to be stationed at the maternity hospital in East

Jerusalem. Segall claimed that delays in stationing the two ambulances in East Jerusalem stem mainly from a conflict between PRCS and the maternity hospital where they are supposed to be stationed; she noted that the GOI is not/not the main obstacle at this point.

15. (C) Segall said, however, that she anticipated that until the new Israeli government is formed, the GOI will not allow the five additional ambulances that PRCS asked to station in East Jerusalem, and the GOI may not allow them even after a new government is formed.

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